

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /079 W
-----252224Z 040163 /72

R 251440Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1412
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FI
SUBJECT: AFL-CIO DELEGATION VISIT TO FINLAND

REF: (A) COPENHAGEN 2890, (B) STOCKHOLM 2091

1. AFL-CIO DELEGATION (REFTELS) VISITED HELSINKI MAY 20-22
AS GUEST OF CENTRAL LABOR FEDERATION SAK AND WHITE COLLAR
FEDERATION TVK. PROGRAM INCLUDED LUNCH HOSTED BY SAK MAY 20,
DINNER THAT EVENING AT KILJAVA TRAINING CENTER WHERE SAK
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WAS MEETING, AND EMBASSY RECEPTION MAY 21,
FOLLOWED BY SAK-TVK HOSTED DINNER.

2. AS THIS WAS FIRST AFL-CIO GROUP TO BE HOSTED BY SAK
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SINCE LATTER'S REORGANIZATION IN MERGER OF COMMUNIST AND
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR FEDERATIONS IN 1969, EMPHASIS WAS
MORE ON SOCIAL CONTACTS THAN ON SUBSTANTIVE
DISCUSSIONS. HOWEVER, VISITORS DID ENGAGE IN LENGTHY
INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF ILO AND OTHER MATTERS
OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH THEIR HOSTS DURING SOCIAL
EVENTS AND SIGHTSEEING TOURS.

3. OFFICIAL HOSTS INCLUDED BOTH COMMUNISTS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN SAK, BUT IN PRACTICE THE ONLY COMMUNIST TO SPEND TIME WITH VISITORS WAS JOHAN VON BONSDORFF, SAK SECOND INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY. VON BONSDORFF PARTICIPATED IN AIRPORT WELCOME AND BOTH LUNCH AND DINNER ON 20TH, SPENDING IN ALL SEVERAL HOURS TALKING WITH DELEGATION MEMBERS. OTHER COMMUNISTS DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN DELEGATION'S ACTIVITIES AND NONE ATTENDED EMBASSY RECEPTION. ACCORDING TO SAK SOURCES, ONLY COMMUNIST TO STATE IN ADVANCE HE WOULD NOT MEET AMERICANS WAS SECOND SECRETARY-GENERAL ELOMAA, WHO LINKED DECISION TO US REFUSAL OF VISA TO FINNISH COMMUNIST METALWORKER THREE YEARS AGO.

4. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, ON OTHER HAND, GAVE VISITORS WARM WELCOME. SAK CHAIRMAN OIVIO HEADED ATTENDANCE AT EMBASSY RECEPTION, WHERE FINNS WERE IN EXPANSIVE MOOD OVER VISIT. DINNER WHICH FOLLOWED WAS OCCASION FOR EXPRESSION OF WARM MUTUAL REGARD BY BOTH SIDES AND HOST PERTTI VIINANEN, SAK SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN, WENT OUT OF WAY TO SAY HE HOPED DELEGATION WOULD RETURN AND SPEND LONGER TIME IN FINLAND.

5. COMMENT: JUDGING FROM REACTIONS OF BOTH DELEGATION MEMBERS AND THEIR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC HOSTS, VISIT WAS USEFUL CONTACT BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND SAK. IT COMPLEMENTED WELL THAT BY ALBERT SHANKER, SUCCESSFULLY PROGRAMMED HERE BY EMBASSY IN APRIL. FINNS HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOLD US THEY WOULD WELCOME MORE SUCH VISITS AS CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW AMERICANS, EVEN IF ON SOME MATTERS RESULT IS ONLY AGREEMENT TO DISAGREE. EMBASSY ENDORSES FURTHER SUCH CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO LABOR MOVEMENTS. HOUSTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING DELEGATIONS, VISITS, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977HELSIN01102
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770187-0524
Format: TEL
From: HELSINKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770520/aaaaario.tel
Line Count: 102
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4332d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 COPENHAGEN 2890, 77 STOCKHOLM 2091
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2381193
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFL-CIO DELEGATION VISIT TO FINLAND
TAGS: ELAB, FI, AFL-CIO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4332d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009